



Veterans and Seniors Update

A Special Report From...

Congressman Adam Putnam

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U.S. House of Representatives

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Putnam Named Guardian Of Seniors' Rights

Representative Adam Putnam can be depended on to protect Social Security and Medicare and to support a prescription drug benefit for seniors," said Jim Martin, President of the 60 Plus Association, a non-partisan senior citizens group with more than half a million members nationally, over 34,000 in Florida and some 1200 in the 12th Congressional District.

Putnam received the accolades from Martin at a Capitol Hill event set to honor those, Martin said, who are "senior friendly" in their votes and legislative proposals. He was also presented with a Guardian of Seniors' Rights Award at the event.

Martin said "seniors have no finer friend" than Adam Putnam.

He said Putnam worked hard to abolish the estate or so-called "death" tax, a 55% confiscatory tax levied on your assets before they pass on to your beneficiaries.

"Rep. Putnam is a proven fighter for seniors," Martin declared, noting that he has previously been the recipient of the Association's Guardian Award, as well as having won the Benjamin Franklin Award given to those who favor repeal of the death tax.

"It was Franklin who famously said there are two certainties in life, taxes and death. But because you can



Rep. Putnam discusses seniors' legislative concerns and receives the 60 Plus Association's Guardian Award from Jim Martin.

still be taxed when you die," Martin added, "there are now three certainties, taxes, death and taxes after death. 60 Plus decided to bestow a Ben Franklin award on congressional members who worked to get rid of that third certainty, taxes after death.

"We thank Rep. Putnam for his strong efforts to 'kill' the death tax," Martin concluded.



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Putnam Works To Lower Prescription Drug Costs For Seniors

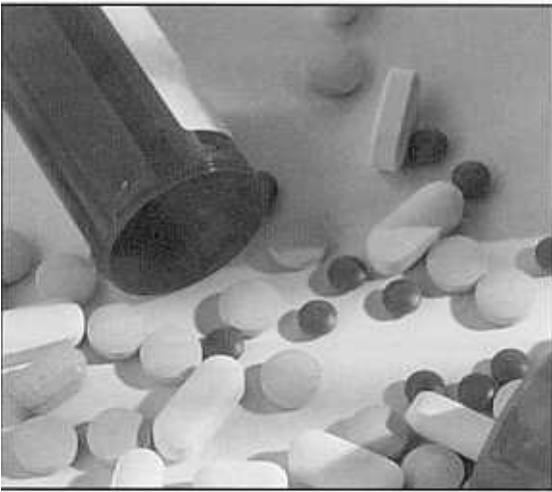
Many Americans are having trouble paying for prescription drugs. One-third of senior citizens in the United States are without prescription drug insurance and these individuals pay on average fifteen percent more for a prescription than do citizens with prescription drug insurance coverage. That is why I fought to include over \$300 billion in this year's

Budget for a prescription drug program. As of press time the final details of the plan are still being worked out, but seniors may be assured that I will continue fighting to keep funding for a prescription drug program in this year's Budget.

For those who can't wait for the new program to begin many pharmaceutical manufacturers on a voluntary

basis offer prescription medication assistance programs. Each program has its own requirements for eligibility and in many cases your doctor may be required to contact the pharmaceutical company on your behalf. Not all medications are available through these programs however; new programs are

(Continued on page 2)



Prescription Drugs continued...

(Continued from page 1)

continually being developed. You may wish to contact a manufacturer directly to inquire about other programs

that may be available. For the phone numbers of companies not listed in this article, you may contact a Physicians Desk Reference, which can be found at many local libraries.

"Many Americans are having trouble paying for prescription drugs ... That is why I fought to include over \$300 billion in this year's Budget for a prescription drug program."

Congressman Adam Putnam

Putnam To Host Roundtable On Gulf War Illness

Congressman to Bring VA and DoD Representatives to Bartow
on June 8, 2002

As Vice Chairman of the Government Reform Committee's Subcommittee on National Defense, Veterans Affairs and International Relations, I am concerned about the health and treatment of the veterans in our state. Due to the health problems suffered by constituents who were members of the 325th Maintenance Company, based in Lake Wales, I have a particular interest in the issue of Gulf War Syndrome.

Of the 700,000 troops who served in the Gulf War, 16% have been awarded disability benefits by the VA. This is a drastic increase from other wars: Vietnam veterans, 9.6%; Korea veterans, 5%; and World War II, 6.6%. Obviously Gulf War veterans were exposed to serious health risks while deployed. The Gulf War involved brief, but intense ground combat. The most likely causes of Gulf War-related

disabilities are environmental factors. We must continue research into the illnesses of Gulf War veterans in an effort to develop treatments for veterans and



Congressman Putnam discusses veterans legislation with Bill Carpenter, a Gulf War veteran.

prevention methods applicable to future engagements.

While I appreciate the work of the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration to address Gulf War veterans' illnesses, including establishing medical

programs to identify and treat sick veterans, providing disability compensation to veterans with undiagnosed illnesses, and conducting research on the prevalence, nature, and possible causes of their illnesses, more must be done. That is why on June the 8th, 2002 at 9:00 am I am hosting a roundtable meeting with Gulf War veterans at the Polk County Historical Museum, 100 East Main Street, Bartow, Florida in the 1926 Courtroom. Representatives of the VA and Department of Defense will attend to answer questions and provide Gulf War veterans with the latest research and practical information on how to receive treatment or evaluation. ***Reservations are not required, but anyone wishing to reserve a seat or who requires special accommodations is encouraged to call Congressman Putnam's District office at 863-534-3530.***

Disability Tax Is On Its Way Out

On March 13, 2002, the Budget Committee, of which I am a member, completed the mark-up of the 2003 budget. This budget provides \$516 million for concurrent receipt for all severely disabled military retirees. Any retiree classified as 60 percent and higher disabled will be eligible.

In 2003, payments would rise for all rated 60 percent disabled to an amount equal to 250 percent of the current special compensation payments. On January 1, 2003, monthly payments would rise from \$50 to \$125 for military retirees with 60 percent VA-disability; from \$100 to \$250 for those with 70 percent or 80 percent disability; from \$200 to \$500 for those with 90 percent disability; and from \$300 to \$750 for those with 100 percent disability.

By January 1, 2007, those with the 60 percent VA disability ratings or higher would receive an amount equivalent to full concurrent receipt. Monthly payments would rise to \$790 for military retirees with 60 percent disability; to \$995 for military retirees with 70 percent disability; to \$1,155 for military retirees with 80 percent disability; to \$1,299 for those with 90 percent disability; and to \$2,163 for those with 100 percent disability. The House of Representatives is well on its way to implementing the phase-in of full concurrent receipt. With my support, House Concurrent Resolution 353, A Wartime Budget to Secure America's Future, passed the House by a 221 to 209 vote on March 20, 2002. On May 9, 2002 the funding was authorized in the Department of Defense Authorization bill, which passed the House by a vote of 359 to 58.

It is unfair to penalize retired military veterans who have been disabled upholding the freedoms we enjoy as Americans by not allowing them to receive both the military retirement they earned as well as the service-connected disability compensation they deserve. Clearly, the intent of veterans' disability compensation is to compensate for an impairment that occurred as a result of serving one's country. This obviously differs from military retirement, which is awarded for years of service to our country. In an effort to achieve concurrent receipt for veterans, I co-sponsored HR 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act. HR 303 was included in the Defense Authorization Act of 2001.



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To receive inside **up-to-date** information on veterans and seniors issues affecting the 12th District of Florida from Congressman Adam Putnam, go to his website at www.house.gov/putnam.

Congressman Putnam will provide breaking news on legislation in the US House of Representatives and the US Senate.

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Veterans and Seniors Newsletter

Congressman Adam Putnam



From the desk of...
Congressman Adam H. Putnam

Dear Friend:

Welcome to the inaugural edition of my Florida Seniors and Veterans Newsletter. This publication is designed to provide updated information on important issues facing Florida's senior citizens and veterans. Florida is the premier state for retirees. However, Florida seniors face a host of challenges including rising medical costs and living on a fixed income in today's economy.

Florida is also home to over 1.6 million veterans. Health issues, including quality care, and fair and equitable retirement benefits are some of the major concerns of most veterans. Veterans often confront a whole host of problems receiving the benefits they deserve. All of the brave men and women who served our nation deserve the benefits the government promised them in recognition of their service. Please contact my office if you need assistance with the Veterans Administration or military retirement.

Please sign up for future newsletters on my website at www.house.gov/putnam. Feel free to forward the electronic version to your friends. It will reach more people and save the taxpayers' money.

Sincerely,